

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 4, 2017

The Honorable John Culberson, Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
H-310, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable José Serrano, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson, and Ranking Member Serrano:

We write to request that as you negotiate and finalize legislation to fund the government for the FY18 budget cycle that you would continue to fund the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) at the FY17 level. While other federal agencies focus on broader demographic and emerging businesses, MBDA focuses exclusively on the unique needs of minority-owned businesses and middle stage businesses.

The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) was established by President Richard Nixon through Executive Order 11458 in 1969. The agency is a part of the Department of Commerce and is the premier federal agency dedicated to supporting the expansion of minority-owned business enterprises. This year President Trump's FY 2018 budget blueprint recommended the elimination of the federal agency. MBDA is the only federal agency whose mission is to specifically advance the growth of minority-owned businesses across the nation. These businesses support \$1 trillion in economic growth to the \$16 trillion U.S. economy.

As one of the fastest growing business sectors in the United States, the economic impact of minority-owned firms continues to strengthen the American business landscape of the 21st century. MBDA's national network of 42 business centers has helped minority-owned business enterprises gain access to capital, contracts, and new markets through public-private engagement. Each center provides businesses with services to assist them to grow in size and scale. Activities are not in duplication of any Small Business Administration program, and include bid proposal support, pricing, commercializing technology, pitching to investors, merging and acquiring firms, and in securing investment. MBDA has assisted clients in accessing nearly \$36 billion in contracts and capital, while helping them create and retain over 124,000 jobs. Furthermore, minority-owned businesses are twice as likely to generate sales through exports compared to non-minority-owned firms due to language and cultural ties to foreign markets. MBDA promotes business-to-business partnerships between U.S. minority-owned firms and firms in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and Europe.

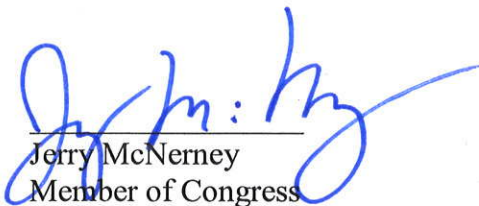
As diversity continues to spearhead a new chapter in our nation's economic growth, MBDA is supporting the next generation of minority-owned businesses by increasing the capacity of regional economies. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007 Survey of Business Owners, these minority business enterprise firms contributed \$1 trillion in total economic output and employed nearly 6 million Americans. These findings highlight that the economic contribution of these firms has a significant impact on the national economy, and more recent Census reports demonstrate that this impact is continuing to grow. However, there are still challenges that minority-owned businesses disproportionately face compared to other businesses. These obstacles include barriers to accessing capital, contracts, and export markets. There is also an impediment in not having existing informal networks that businesses traditionally rely on in the pursuit of business opportunities.

MBDA helps firms to realize their full economic potential through technical assistance, public and private contracting opportunities, advocacy, research and education, and by serving as a strategic partner for growth and development. MBDA is the only federal agency dedicated to the growth and global competitiveness of our nation's 8.5 million minority-owned businesses.

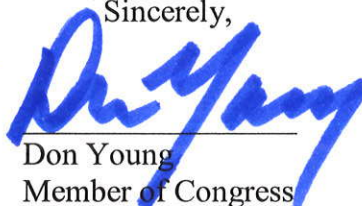
Given the economic challenges that minority-owned businesses face and the income and wealth gap between minority and non-minority communities, it is important that we fund MBDA to support these firms with overcoming some of the obstacles that they disproportionately encounter.

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring that minority-owned businesses are able to maximize their potential, and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



Don Young
Member of Congress



G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

Signatories to the MBDA Programmatic Letter Cont.

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard	Rep. Gregory Meeks
Rep. Karen Bass	Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton
Rep. Madeleine Bordallo	Rep. Frank Pallone Jr.
Rep. Anthony G. Brown	Rep. Donald M. Payne Jr.
Rep. Salud Carbajal	Rep. Scott Peters
Rep. Tony Cárdenas	Rep. Stacey Plaskett
Rep. André Carson	Rep. Jamie Raskin
Rep. Judy Chu	Rep. Cedric L. Richmond
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Rep. Steve Cohen	Rep. Jan Schakowsky
Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman	Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
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Rep. Susan A. Davis	Rep. Bennie Thompson
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Rep. Hakeem Jeffries	
Rep. Hank Johnson	
Rep. Robin Kelly	
Rep. Ruben Kihuen	
Rep. Al Lawson	
Rep. Barbara Lee	
Rep. John Lewis	
Rep. Zoe Lofgren	
Rep. Donald A. McEachin	